

Hall-Ford House

HABS No. ALA-46

~~An addendum to~~  
Ford House  
165 St. Emanuel Street  
Mobile  
Mobile County  
Alabama

HABS  
ALA,  
49-MOBI,  
47-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

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FORD HOUSE (RESIDENCE)  
165 St. Emanuel Street, N. E. corner of  
Monroe Street.  
Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama.

Ownership:

Present Owner: Mrs. Mary Q. Ford. From 1923 to 1935.

Previous Owners: Edward Hall. From 1834 to 1853.  
Issac D. Spear. From 1853 to 1888.  
Catherine A. Spear. From 1888 to 1889.  
Sarah C. Doyle. From 1889 to 1897.  
Mrs. Ellen Quinn. From 1897 to 1923.

Date of Erection: 1834 to 1835.

Architect: Unknown.

Builder: Edward Hall.

Present Condition: Unusually good. except for new roofing  
and general repairs no material changes in exterior.

Number of Stories: Main building two and one half stories.  
Servants quarters two stories.

Materials of Construction: Main building first story of  
brick and smooth stucco, above stories of frame and weather  
boards. Plaster walls on front porches. Original shingles  
probably of wood. Servants quarters of common brick painted;  
slate roof.

Other Existing Records:

See: "HISTORIC BUILDINGS OF OLD MOBILE"  
By John F. Glennon.  
Pen & ink drawings done by,  
Chivi Glennon Lasley.

This book is an advertisement of the First  
National Bank, Mobile, Alabama.

Additional Data: The high first story, of basement effect, main entrance, small windows, and dormers, and outside capped chimneys are noticeable.

Light Doric columns superimposed on simplified ones of the same order, are features of the wide front porches.

The interior while comparatively plain has trim of unusual modelling, and a spiral newel stairway of good workmanship. On the front door is found the massive wrought iron rim lock, characteristic of many buildings of the same period.

Source of Material: Mr. John Glennon  
205 St. Francis St.  
Mobile, Alabama.  
Mrs. Mary Q. Ford.  
165 St. Emanuel St.  
Mobile, Alabama.  
Mr. G. Chaudron Jr.,  
258 Stocking St.  
Mobile, Alabama.

Compiled By: Katherine Floyd.  
Auburn, Alabama.  
Glennita Broach  
Mobile, Alabama.  
Approved: E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer, HABS.  
Auburn, Alabama.  
Date: 8-27-1936.

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## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ALA-46

## HALL-FORD HOUSE

ALA

Mo. Mobile

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An addendum to  
Ford House  
165 St. Emanuel Street  
Mobile, Alabama  
in HABS Catalog (1941)

Location: 165 St. Emanuel Street, Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama  
Geographic Location Code: 01-2100-097

Present Owner: Heirs of Thomas A. Ford (died 1971)

Present Occupant: Transient tenants

Present Use: Rooms and apartments

Statement of Significance: This house is an exceptionally fine example of early residences in nineteenth-century Mobile. Substantially unaltered, the house is one of the oldest existing structures in the area.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: c. 1835
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners: Unverified local tradition relates that the existing house incorporates part of a previous house that may have been constructed by William R. Hallett in 1832. It is said that the earlier house had been partially destroyed by fire when Hallett sold the property to Edward Hall in 1834. No physical evidence has been found that would indicate the incorporation of a previous building into the existing structure, which was apparently built by Hall shortly after he purchased the property. The following chain of title was extracted from the deed books of the Probate Court Record Division, Mobile County.

1832 Deed January 20, 1832 in Book K page 178  
Addin Lewis  
to  
William R. Hallett  
(Lot 66' x 116'; \$790.00)

1834 Deed December 31, 1834 in Book N page 146  
William R. Hallett  
to  
Edward Hall  
(Lot 66' x 116'; \$800.00)

ALA  
49-Mobi  
47.

1853 Deed July 4, 1853 in Book 7 page 191  
Edward Hall  
to  
Isaac D. Spear  
(Lot 116' x 130'; \$11,000.)

The heirs of Isaac Spear maintained the property until 1897, when it passed to Ellen Quinn. Her son, Thomas A. Ford, held the title until his death in 1971; it is now in possession of his heirs.

4. Builder or contractor: Unknown

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Lewis Troost Map (c. 1840), City Hall, Mobile

Mobile Deed Books, Probate Court Record Division,  
Mobile County

2. Secondary and published sources:

Glennon, John F., and Rosemary Glennon, Where Time Bears Witness to Sound Building, Mobile: First National Bank, 1935.

Nineteenth Century Mobile Architecture, An Inventory of Existing Buildings, Mobile: Mobile City Planning Commission (unpublished manuscript to be published 1972).

Prepared by Linda Carroll  
Student Historian  
August 29, 1966  
and  
Charles A. Herrington  
Architectural Historian  
National Park Service  
July 31, 1972

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

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A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This house is an excellent example of the adaptation of the Greek Revival style to an indigenous building type, the raised "Creole Cottage". Restrained, and of good proportions, the structure is unusual in Mobile, in that the frame cottage is raised on a full-height masonry basement that is completely habitable. It is also one of the few remaining houses in Mobile that has two service wings, thereby creating a patio enclosed on three sides.
2. Condition of fabric: The structure is sound, but not well-maintained at present.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This is a two-and-a-half story house, with all floors habitable. The attached and detached wings, together with the main rectangular block, form a "U"-shaped plan. A two-story irregular addition on the northeast corner is not considered in this description. The house measures 46'-3" (five-bays) on the west front, 63'-3" on the north side, and 109'-8" on the south side. The height of the roof ridge is 41'-2" above grade.
2. Foundations: Although not accessible, the foundations are presumed to be brick.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The first floor of the main section is brick covered by scored stucco to resemble ashlar construction. On the detached service wing, the scored stucco is carried only to window sill height, with exposed red brick above. All other walls on the upper stories are horizontal siding, except on the west front, where the wood is covered with smooth stucco, in accordance with local custom. Except for the exposed red brick on the service wing, all surfaces are painted yellow ochre.
4. Structural system, framing: Brick masonry bearing walls on the first floor support an ordinary wooden frame construction above.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: There is a two-story columnar porch running the full width of the building on the west front. Made of wood and fluted, the columns are of the Doric Order, although those on the first story rest on squat

brick piers and have simplified capitals. There is a balustrade with small square balusters on the second floor. In the rear, there is a two-story wooden gallery on all three sides of the patio. On the south wing, the gallery is cantilevered; the other sections are supported by stuccoed brick piers on the first floor, and smooth wooden Doric columns on the second floor. Exterior wooden stairs give access to the second floor from the patio. On the south side of the patio is a wooden bulkhead covering steps which lead down to the cellar.

6. Chimneys: There are two stuccoed brick chimneys on both the north and south sides of the house; the tops are mitred and each has three flues. There is also a centrally located chimney on each of the service wings.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The entrance doorway on the west front is set deep within the brick wall and has no face trim. The double wooden doors have two panels, the upper being glazed with a single light. The doors are flanked by slender fluted Doric columns, narrow sidelights, and a Doric pilaster applied to the jamb reveal. The soffits are panelled. The sidelights consist on three colored lights over a fixed louvered panel that is solid on the interior. The plane of the door is set deeper in the reveal than are the sidelights. A heavy architrave is framed over the door and sidelights, above which is a transom of five colored and figured lights. Framed inside the small columns flanking the doors is a vertical member supporting a pair of louvered wood shutters. When these are open, the columns and sidelights are hidden from view. On the second floor, the scale and basic elements of the doorway leading to the porch are identical. The slender columns are not repeated, however, and the doorway is framed by beaded mouldings with hull's eyes at the intersections. The glazing is clear, and the doors are solid, with four panels each.
  - b. Windows and shutters: All windows are double-hung wooden sash with six-over-six lights. There are low Dutch doors under the windows on the second floor of the porch, making them floor-length openings. All wooden sills and frames are small and absolutely plain. Each opening has adjustable louvered wooden shutters.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: There is a gabled roof over the main block which kicks off over the front porch and rear gallery. The rear attached service wing has a gabled roof that intersects that of the main section, and the detached wing has a single pitched roof. All roofs are covered with asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The eaves are flush on the gable ends with no overhang, and finished with a simple unmoulded cornice board.
- c. Dormers: There are three dormers on the west front and two on the east rear. Pedimented, and framed by small fluted pilasters, they were originally all shuttered.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The house has a central hall plan, with two equal rooms on each side of the house. On the first floor, the rooms on each side are interconnected by hinged double doors, as are those of the second floor. On the third floor under the roof, there are two equal rooms on each side and the west end of the hall is enclosed to form another room. The first floor of the attached service wing (north) consists of two interconnected rooms in a line with openings on the patio. The second floor is similar. The detached wing (south) has two rooms in line and an open carriageway, which has now been enclosed. On the second floor, there are four rooms in a line.
2. Stairways: The main interior stairway is located at the rear of the hall and consists of a double flight on each floor. Slender turned balusters spiral at the bottom of the first floor and form the balustrade on all floors. Scrollwork is applied on the carriage and facing of the stairwell.
3. Flooring: The flooring throughout is random-width pine boards.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All walls and ceilings are painted plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: The single interior doors are all wooden, with four horizontal panels. Lock rails are 12" and the widest framing members. The double doors are similar, except that they have five panels.
6. Special decorative features, trim: There is very little decorative detailing on the interior. Door and window trim



consists of flat fillets; windows on the first floor have wooden panels below the sill line and simple picture mouldings are used on the walls. The window jambs slant.

7. Notable hardware: Heavy locks on the hall door bear the inscription: "Carpenter and Company, Patentees." These also bear the coat of arms of Great Britain, including the rampant lion and unicorn. The shutters hinges are "Z"-shaped with pintles.
8. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating: Modern gas space heaters have been installed. The original fireplaces on the first floor have black marble mantelpieces with cast-iron grates. Fluted marble pilasters support an entablature consisting of a flat center panel flanked by widely swelling "S" profiles.
  - b. Lighting: No original fixtures remain, and modern electric fixtures have been installed.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house is situated on the northeast corner of St. Emanuel and Monroe Streets, facing west. In one of the oldest sections of Mobile, now part of the Church Street East Historic District, the house is located one block south of the site of Fort Conde, the French fortification that once protected the city. Plans have been formulated for the development of this area as a museum complex of nineteenth-century Mobile architecture.
2. Landscaping: The enclosed patio on the rear is paved with modern cement, and the head of the original cistern protrudes near the southwest corner of the detached service wing. The front and part of the side yards are enclosed with a cast-iron fence set on a stuccoed brick wall, capped with red limestone. This fence was undoubtedly added in the 1870's or 1880's.
3. Outbuildings: There are no outbuildings other than the original service wings and later additions.

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Prepared by Woodrow W. Wilkins 47-  
Supervising Architect  
National Park Service  
August 12, 1966  
and  
Charles A. Herrington  
Architectural Historian  
National Park Service  
July 31, 1972

### PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as a cooperative project during the summer of 1966 between the Historic American Buildings Survey and various agencies, organizations, and individuals of the City of Mobile. The Historic American Buildings Survey supplied the project supervisor, Woodrow W. Wilkins, and three draughtsmen, Carl J. Rosenburg (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Michael R. Foil (Auburn University), and Lowell K. West (University of Kentucky). One draughtsman, Elbert L. Coleman (Alabama A & M), was provided by the Mobile Housing Board, which agency administers urban renewal. The services of an additional draughtsman, James Eley, specifically designated as an architectural student from Auburn University, were made possible by contributions from numerous local architects and businessmen. The Historic Mobile Preservation Society, in agreement with the History Department of Springhill College, provided a student historian, Linda Carroll. Office space was supplied by the City of Mobile through the City Planning Commission. Roy Thigpen, a local photographer, was contracted to supply the photographs. All local arrangements were made by the Mobile Historic Development Commission, Mrs. Nancy N. Holmes, President. The project was edited during the summer of 1972 by Charles A. Herrington, Architectural Historian, in a cooperative effort between the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Mobile Historic Development Commission.